



Oologah
Observer

“Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...” Matthew 28:20

Church of Christ • 13800 S. 4080 Road • P.O. Box 527 • Oologah, Oklahoma 74053

Who Should Lead Our Worship?

Chuck Northrop

God has always expected those who lead in worship and service to be faithful to Him. Sadly, such is not always the case. Some brethren are even advocating and encouraging those who are unfaithful to be leaders. Those who advocate such argue saying if we give responsibility to the unfaithful, they will become faithful. They say if we get them to teach a Bible class, lead a prayer, or serve on the Lord’s table, it will get them to attend. Brethren, such thinking is getting the cart before the horse.

Paul’s purpose in writing his first letter to Timothy was “that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God” (1 Timothy 3:15). These words do not apply to just Timothy but to all fellow workers in the household of faith. Paul wanted Timothy to know how Christians ought to behave in the church so he could instruct the church pertaining to these matters.

Concerning men who lead in worship, Paul wrote, “I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting” (1 Timothy 2:8). First, notice Paul’s instruction does not merely apply to the worship assembly but to worship wherever and whenever it is offered. Because of the context, Paul used prayer as a synecdoche (“a figure of speech by which we speak of the whole by a part...” – Dungan) representing all five avenues of worship. Second, notice the instruction given concerned men (males as opposed

to children and women). Finally, notice there are three specific conditions placed upon men who lead in prayer or more generally lead worship.

The first of these conditions is men should pray “lifting up holy hands.” It is true the practice of the ancients was to lift up their hands in public prayers, but what is being stressed here is not the posture of prayer. “Lifting up holy hands” is a figure of speech denoting moral purity and holy living. The person doing the leading of our worship is to be the kind of person whose life is a reflection of holy living. The prayers of a person who persists in sin are not heard (Isaiah 59:1-2; Micah 3:4; 1 Peter 3:12). Brethren, let us be sure. A person who willfully sins by forsaking the assembly (Hebrews 10:25-26) persists in sin, and his prayers are not heard by God. Do we really want someone to lead us in worship whose prayers are not heard beyond the four walls of our church buildings?

The second condition is men should pray “without wrath.” This denotes a disposition of the mind. A man who leads in worship should not have such a disposition which displays anger towards God, His provisions, nor His commandments. Further, he should not exhibit anger towards his fellow Christian nor his fellow man. The reason for such is found in James 1:20 which says, “For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.”

The third condition is men should pray without “doubting.” The person leading us in worship ought to do so believing his worship will come before the throne of God. In this way, his worship is offered in faith (James 1:6). Jesus taught, “What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them” (Mark 11:24). Surely, we would not want a man to lead us in our worship who does not believe God will accept our offering of “the sacrifice of praise” (Hebrews 13:15).

God expects those who lead in worship and service to be faithful is a principle clearly demonstrated in scripture. Concerning the training of men to preach, Paul wrote, “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2). The gospel is to be deposited in “faithful men” who will not betray the charge to “preach the word” (2 Timothy 4:2), and who will deposit the same truths in other faithful men. In this way the succession of teachers would be sustained. However, if the deposit was made to the unfaithful hoping they would become faithful, the succession of teachers would likely fail.

In the list of the qualifications of deacons, Paul wrote, “And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless” (1 Timothy 3:10). The word “proved” means tried or tested. Only after men have been tried, tested, and proved are they qualified to serve as a deacon. The unfaithful have been tested, but they have failed the tests and, thereby, are not qualified to serve.

In Acts 6, a problem arose in the church in Jerusalem. The Grecian “widows were neglected in the daily ministration.” To solve the problem, the twelve apostles called upon the disciples to seek out seven faithful men to take care of these widows. The apostles did not call upon the disciples to find some unfaithful brethren to care for this situation hoping it would make them faithful. The solution was not found in the unfaithful but the faithful because the faithful will be loyal and steadfast in their responsibilities.

Jesus in the *Parable of the Talents* taught those who use their talents faithfully will be rewarded with greater talents, and those who are slothful will have their talents removed (Matthew 25:14-30). Because the faithful stewards were “faithful over a few things,” the Lord will reward them by giving them charge over many things (Matthew 25:21,23).

Brethren, if a man will not be faithful in a lesser responsibility such as attendance, why would we think he would be faithful in a greater responsibility such as serving on the Lord’s table, leading in prayer, or teaching a Bible class? In stark contrast to those who advocate giving greater responsibilities to the unfaithful, Jesus taught, “He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much” (Luke 16:10).

“He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law,
even his prayer *shall be* abomination.”
— Proverbs 28:9

Unwarranted Conclusions

Have you heard about the farmer who was driving along a winding road and had to stop short to avoid being hit by a woman who was coming around a curve on the wrong side of the road? Before he could yell at her, she stuck her head out of the window and shouted, “Pig!” Furious, the farmer yelled back, “Old sow!” and began driving on. Rounding the curve, he slammed on his brakes. There in the middle of the road stood the largest pig he had ever seen.

Things are not always what they first appear. The woman was not calling the man a pig, she was warning him. But he jumped to an unwarranted conclusion, and came out looking bad, and doubtless feeling that way too. Some of us need to be less impetuous. Let us work on it and make our lives more rewarding.

— author unknown

Observations and Concerns

December 6, 2023

Welcome Visitors! We are excited to have YOU with us today.

Praise in Psalm: “Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name’s sake” (Psalm 79:9).

Declaration of Appreciation: We are thankful for the children and for all students who see the need and come to Bible classes each week.

Tyler Bird will be our guest speaker Sunday morning. He is from the Bible Institute of Missouri.

Our **monthly potluck** and annual gift exchange is Sunday, December 10th. There is a sign-up sheet for finger foods posted on the bulletin board. If you wish to participate in the gift exchange, please bring a \$10 gift.

Our sympathy is extended to the family of **Dewaine Orr** who perished in a fire last week. Dewaine is Kathy Orr’s cousin.

Remember in Prayer:

- ▶ **Darla Smith** has upcoming appointments to determine how to move forward after a mass she had biopsied was malignant.
- ▶ **Walter Jackson** fell recently and has been in the hospital.
- ▶ **Sammy Gray** will be having medical tests in the upcoming weeks.
- ▶ **Gene Bishop**, friend of Doyle and Dicie, fell and had staples put in his head.
- ▶ **Ed Dindy**, father of Tia Swearingen, is scheduled to begin treatments for cancer this week.
- ▶ **Ralph Hunter** suffered a stroke last week and is in the hospital.
- ▶ **Trayton Linton**, great-grandson of Darla Smith, is recovering at home from an auto accident.
- ▶ **Kaylee Northrop**, granddaughter of Chuck and Jody, had surgery on her foot recently.
- ▶ **Shawna Northrop**, daughter-in-law of Chuck and Jody, had knee surgery last week.

Schedule of Services	Assignments				
		Wednesday, Dec. 6	Sunday, Dec. 10 AM	Sunday, Dec. 10 PM	
	Sundays				
	Bible Classes. . 9:30 AM	Announcements	Doyle Jackson	Chuck Northrop	Bill Dilks
	Worship 10:30 AM	Prayer	Doyle Jackson	Chuck Northrop	Bill Dilks
	Worship 5:00 PM	Song Leader	Ross Swearingen	Bill Dilks	Ross Swearingen
	Wednesdays	Lord's Supper (speaker)		Doyle Jackson	Chris Nelson
	Bible Classes. . 7:00 PM	Lord's Supper		Chris Nelson	
	Website: oologahcofc.org	Lesson	Chuck Northrop	Tyler Bird	Chuck Northrop
		Prayer	Bill Dilks	Ross Swearingen	Doyle Jackson
	Door Attendant	Chris Nelson	Ross Swearingen	Doyle Jackson	